

Opportunity

In Action

June 9-11, 2026

**Hard Rock Hotel & Casino
 Atlantic City**

Preliminary Agenda

Join the **New Jersey Council of County Colleges** and **New Jersey's 18 Community Colleges** on **June 9-11, 2026**, for an exciting multi-day conference at the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City. As the landscape of work and learning continues to evolve, this Summit underscores the increasingly critical role community colleges play in expanding access to opportunity and responding to workforce needs in key industries through innovative strategies and agile and authentic partnerships.

The 2026 **New Jersey Community College Opportunity Summit** is a three-day convening centered on **Opportunity in Action**, bringing partners together through collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment to expand economic opportunity and prosperity for all New Jerseyans. Participants will hear from state and national leaders, learn from effective practices across the state, and develop strategies that translate policy and partnerships into real-world outcomes for learners and workers.

The **New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit**, held on **June 9, 2026**, will kick off the Opportunity Summit, highlighting progress and next steps in aligning education and workforce systems to meet New Jersey's talent needs.

June 9

NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit Pathways That Work: Skills. Credentials. Mobility Empowering Learners. Advancing New Jersey.

Breakfast (7:30 am)

Welcoming Remarks (9:00 am)

Catherine Starghill, Vice President and Chief Workforce Innovation Officer, New Jersey Council of County Colleges and Executive Director, New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development

Chris Emigholz, Chief Government Affairs Officer, New Jersey Business and Industry Association

President Michael McDonough, Raritan Valley Community College and Chair, New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development

Margo Chaly, Secretary, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education

Yolanda Allen, Assistant Commissioner of Workforce Development, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Building Careers Through Credentials (9:45 AM)

Rachel Khan, Senior Director, Community College Growth Engine, Education Design Lab

Pathways Projects Networking (10:45 AM)

The Data You Need to Drive Workforce Strategy (11:30 AM)

Nicol Nicola, Director, Division of Economic & Demographic Research, Office of Research and Information, New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Lunch (12:15 PM)

June 9 (Cont.)

NJ Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit
Pathways That Work: Skills. Credentials. Mobility
Empowering Learners. Advancing New Jersey.

A Conversation of Presidents: What More Can We Do to Collaborate, Align, and Stack for Student Pathways (12:45 PM)

President Michael Avaltroni, Fairleigh Dickinson University and Chair, NJ Presidents' Council

President Jonathan Koppell, Montclair State University

President Lovell Pugh-Bassett, Camden County College

President Anthony Iacono, County College of Morris

President Marrgaret M. McMenamin, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

AI in Action: Building New Jersey's Innovation Economy (2:00 PM)

Liat Krawczyk, Executive Director, NJ AI Hub

David Cole, Chief Innovation Officer, NJ Innovation Authority

Senator Andrew Zwicker, New Jersey State Senator and Head Public Engagement and Development, Princeton Plasma Physics Lab

Pathways in Action: Projects Driving Impact (3:00 PM)

NJ Micro Business Hydroponics Network

Pathways to Careers in Teaching

Pathways Projects Networking (3:45 PM)

Partnerships Powering Pathways (4:15 - 5:00 PM)

Fran Kuhn, Executive Director, Atlantic County Workforce Development Board

Retired Judge Sandson, Superior Court of New Jersey

James Horne, President, Junior Achievement of New Jersey

June 10

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Opportunity in Action

Breakfast Buffet (7:30am)

Introductions and Opening Remarks (9:00am)

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Jessica Purnell, Trustee, Camden County College, and Chair, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Future Ready New Jersey Coalition: Why "75x2040" Matters to Equity and Broad-based Economic Prosperity (9:15am)

Maria Heidkamp, Chief Innovation and Policy Officer, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

What Does "Of Value" Mean and How Do Students and Adult Learners Pay for Short-term Nondegree Credentials Currently? (9:45am)

Ilan Levine, Principal Associate, Quality Skills and Education Pathways, The Pew Charitable Trusts

Exhibitor Break (10:15am)

What Supports Do Students Need to Succeed? (10:30am)

Iris Palmer, Director, Community Colleges Initiative, Center on Education & Labor at New America

Crafting a Future Ready New Jersey Coalition Action Blueprint: Steps to 75x2040 (11:00am)

Assemblywoman Carmen Morales, Chair, Assembly Higher Education Committee, New Jersey State Legislature

Harbani Ahuja, Senior Counsel, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice

Chrissy Buteas, President and Chief Executive Officer, HealthCare Institute of New Jersey and Trustee, Middlesex College

Exhibitor Break (1:30pm)

June 10 (Cont.)

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Opportunity in Action

More Essential Than Ever: Community College Pathways to Post-Completion Success (12:00pm)

Davis Jenkins, Senior Research Scholar, Community College Research Center

Hana Lahr, Assistant Director of Research and Director of Applied Learning, Community College Research Center

Exhibitor Break (1:30pm)

1:45pm Breakouts

Holistic Student Services

Community College Panelists

Leanne Davis, Managing Researcher, Education Northwest

The Development of the Essential Learning Framework

Katie Lynch, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Brookdale Community College

Karen Bearce, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, Raritan Valley Community College

New Jersey's Data Ecosystem

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Alexandra Gusciora, Research Analyst, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Stephanie Walsh, Assistant Director & Director of the New Jersey Statewide Data System, Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Reimagining the Community College: How Agentic AI Empowers Lean Teams to Scale

Jacob Thomas, Executive Vice President & Managing Partner, Drivestream

June 10 (Cont.)

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Opportunity in Action

Meeting (2:30pm)

Community College Business Officers' Meeting: Health Insurance Discussion

2:30pm Breakouts

Early Intervention: "We'll See" Isn't a Strategy

Sheenah Hartigan, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Services, Ocean County College

Jim Campbell, Director of Student Success and Retention, Ocean County College

Student Engagement in Research:

Samsung Innovation Campus @ Bergen Community College: Collaboration at Work

Emily Vandalovsky, Dean of Mathematics, Science & Technology Division, Bergen Community College

Bridging the Gap: The Power of Undergraduate Research in STEM Success

Edem Tetteh, Dean of STEM, Rowan College at Burlington County

Unlocking Longitudinal Data

Victoria Coty, Research Project Assistant, Research Project Assistant, Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Kirsten Meidlinger, Research Project Assistant, Heldrich Center for Workforce Development

Exhibitor Break (3:15pm)

June 10 (Cont.)

New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Summit: Opportunity in Action

3:45pm Breakouts

Community College Pathways to Post-Completion Success

Expanding Opportunities Through Dual Enrollment: A Panel Discussion

Christopher Conzen, Executive Director, Secaucus Center & Early College Programs, Hudson County Community College

Tanya Da Silva, Director of Early College and Dual Enrollment, Passaic County Community College

Cara Novak, Director of Educational Partnerships, Brookdale Community College

Shay Wadher, Director of K-12 Partnerships, Raritan Valley Community College

Pathways at Ocean

Alexa Beshara Blauth, Executive Director, Institutional Planning, Ocean County College

Catherine Mancuso, Dean, Academic Affairs and Faculty Development, Ocean County College

James Marshall, Executive Director, Curriculum/Academic Affairs, Ocean County College

Data-Informed Community Colleges

Michelle Van Noy, Director & Associate Research Professor, Education and Employment Research Center

AI That Transforms Community Colleges: Fraud, Student Services, and Automation

Katan Cheti and Tom Gavin, N2N Services Inc.

Networking Reception (Cash Bar and Light Hors D'oeuvres 3:15pm)

Community College Awards Dinner in Honor of President Steven M. Rose (6:00pm)

June 11

New Jersey's Opportunity Agenda: Building Pathways to Equity and Economic Prosperity

Breakfast Buffet (7:30am)

Community Colleges in a Changing World Discussion (9:00am)

Jee Hang Lee, President & CEO, Association of Community College Trustees

Aaron Fichtner, President, New Jersey Council of County Colleges

Exhibitor Break (9:45am)

10:10am Breakouts

Bridging the Gap: Uniting Admissions and Advising to Foster First-Year Student Belonging

Pamela Marcenaro, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management, County College of Morris

Aligning College and Career

Equity in Action: Aligning Schools, Community College, and Workforce for Student Success

José Laureano, Vice President, Student and Enrollment Services, Middlesex College

Lisa Rodriguez-Gregory, Dean of Enrollment Management, Middlesex College

Ria Gaviria, Director, Advising, Career & Transfer Services, Middlesex College

Beyond Completion: Community College 3.0, Systems Redesign, and Post-Completion Success

Nicole Cippoletti, Dean, Scotch Plains and Virtual Campus, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

June 11 (Cont.)

New Jersey's Opportunity Agenda: Building Pathways to Equity and Economic Prosperity

10:10am Breakouts (Cont.)

Bridging High School and College Through Scalable Financial Literacy Partnerships

Anthony J. Trump, Vice President of Student Affairs, Bergen Community College

Andrew Tomko, Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Bergen Community College

Empowering STEM Students through the Integration of AI in the Learning Environment and Responsible Use

Sherry Heidary, Associate Professor of Chemistry, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

11:05am Breakouts

Breaking Barriers: Advancing First-Generation Success at Middlesex

José Laureano, Vice President, Student and Enrollment Services, Middlesex College

Odé Hoppie, Dean of Students, Middlesex College

Transforming Student Success Through Math Redesign: Closing Equity Gaps Through Guided Math Pathways

Taziah Kenney, Associate Dean of STEM, Rowan College at Burlington County

Cathy Briggs, Dean of Student Success, Rowan College at Burlington County

June 11 (Cont.)

New Jersey's Opportunity Agenda: Building Pathways to Equity and Economic Prosperity

10:10am Breakouts (Cont.)

Clear Paths, Open Doors: How Full-Year Registration Drives Equity and Opportunity

Karen Archambault, Senior Vice President, Enrollment Management and Student Success, Rowan College at Burlington County

Alexandra O'Neil, Associate Dean, Advising and Rowan Relations, Rowan College at Burlington County

Lacy Jane Ryman, Registrar, Rowan College at Burlington County

Gabrielle Marcucci, Student Services Generalist, Rowan College at Burlington County

AI Showcase

Survey of Student Use of AI at CCM

Kelly Fitzpatrick, Associate Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness, County College of Morris

Beyond Detection: AI-Forward and AI-Resistant Assignment Design for Authentic Student Learning

Lauren Schwartz, Academic Technology Coordinator, Salem Community College

From Reactive to Predictive: Building an AI-Powered Student Success Ecosystem

Agnieszka Drupka, Dean of AI Innovation, UCNJ Union College of Union County, NJ

Presidents' Panel, Leading College Transformation: Reflections and Thoughts on Community College Collaboration to Strengthen Our Agile, Innovative Framework (12:00 - 1:00pm)